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Message Text

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---------- 028823
R 172204Z AUG 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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TEHRAN POUCH TO SHIRAZ AND ISFAHAN

FOLLOWING REPEAT SEOUL 6284 ACTION SECSTATE INFO JIDDA DHAHRAN
MANAMA SANA 13 AUG 1976

QUOTE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SEOUL 6284

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EALR, EFIN, ELAB, XF, OPEC, ECRE, SA KS
SUBJ: FOREIGN LABOR PROBLEMS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN
SAUDI ARABIA'S EASTERN PROVINCE

REF: (A) DHAHRAN 1008, (B) SEOUL A-007 DATED 2/3/76 (NOTAL)

1. AMCONSUL DHAHRAN'S EXCELLENT REPORT ON EMERGENT
SAUDI POPULAR ATTITUDES TOWARD STOICISM AND MILITARY-
LIKE ORGANIZATION OF KOREAN CONSTRUCTION WORKERS RAISES
AN ISSUE OF POTENTIAL ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE TO ROK
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OVERSEAS CONSTRUCTION EFFORT. FIGURE OF 8,000 KOREANS

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IN CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES ACCORDS WITH EMBASSY AND ROKG ESTIMATES, WITH POSSIBILITY OF ADDITIONAL NUMBERS IN NON-CONSTRUCTION FIELDS. NUMBER OF KOREANS MUST INCREASE BY SEVERAL MORE THOUSANDS IN 1976 IF CONTRACT OBLIGATIONS ARE TO BE MET.

2. BEHAVIOR CITED BY AMCONSUL EVIDENCE CONSCIOUS KOREAN DESIRE TO AVOID SOCIAL FRICTIONS, BUT OBVIOUSLY LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES MAKE "MINGLING" VERY DIFFICULT FOR KOREAN WORKERS. HOWEVER, SHOULD SUCH BEHAVIORAL TRAITS AS SMILES, CLOTHING VARIETY OR "BREAKING RANKS" IN PUBLIC BE RECOGNIZED AS HELPFUL, KOREANS WOULD WISH PROMPTLY TO ADOPT THEM. QUESTION IS WHETHER THEY MAY HAVE BEEN FULLY AWARE OF HOW OTHERS SEE THEM.

3. KOREA/SAUDI JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE WILL OPEN SECOND CONFERENCE IN SEOUL ON AUGUST 16 FOR ONE WEEK AND QUESTION OF VISAS AND/OR WORKER PUBLIC RELATIONS WOULD APPEAR TO BE APPROPRIATE SUBTOPIC DURING DISCUSSION OF FOURTH MAJOR TOPIC, "MANPOWER". THE OTHER THREE ARE (A) CAPITAL, JOINT VENTURES, AND INVESTMENTS; (B) CONSTRUCTION; AND (C) TRADE. EMBOFFS PERCEIVE THIS QUESTION AS SIGNIFICANT TO AMERICAN INTERESTS BECAUSE US FIRMS ARE INVOLVED WITH KOREAN CONSTRUCTION FIRMS AND/OR LABOR.

4. EMBASSY APPRECIATES AMCONSUL'S TIMELY AND THOUGHTFUL REPORT. WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING IF OTHER ADDRESSES ENCOUNTERED SIMILAR REACTIONS. WE WILL TAKE STEPS INFORMALLY TO ALERT CONCERNED ROKG OFFICIALS TO THE EXISTENCE OF POTENTIAL UNNECESSARY SOCIAL FRICTIONS SO THAT THEY MAY VERIFY FOR THEMSELVES AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION EITHER WITHIN ROK/SAUDI ECONOMIC CONFERENCE OR IN CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING AMONG VARIOUS TRAINING AND STUDY GROUPS PREPARING WORKERS FOR MIDEAST SERVICE.

5. REQUEST DEPARTMENT CONSIDER REPEATING REFTEL AND THIS MESSAGE TO AMEMBASSIES TEHERAN, KUWAIT, DOHA, ABU DHABI AND AMCONSUL KHORRAMSHAHR WITH REQUEST FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INFORMATION ON WHETHER ROK CONSTRUCTION WORKERS GENERATING SIMILAR PUBLIC REACTIONS. STERN UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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